

DETAILED ACTION

Allowance

Applicant's arguments filed 01/07/2010, with respect to amended claims, have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection filed 07/08/2009 has been withdrawn.

Claims 5, 9, 17, 19 and 21-23 are allowed.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the claimed invention is distinguished over the prior art of record in that the prior art does not teach a halftone phase shift mask and a halftone phase shift mask blank which comprises of a substrate, a light transmissive layer and an ammonium ion production preventing layer so that the light transmissive layer comprises of a metal, silicon and nitrogen, and the ammonium ion production preventing layer comprises of a metal, silicon, and nitrogen, in which the ammonium ion production preventing layer is formed by the oxidation of a portion of the light transmissive layer and the ammonium ion production preventing layer has a lesser amount of nitrogen than the light transmissive layer.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to RASHID ALAM whose telephone number is (571)270-3959. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri. 7:30 am-5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mark Huff can be reached on 571-272-1385. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Mark F. Huff/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1795

/RASHID ALAM/
Examiner, Art Unit 1795